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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [SOCI](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG MILITARY COMMANDER DESCRIBES HIS PROBLEMS

REF: NAIROBI 1370

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Transitional Federal Government (TFG) armed forces commander Yusuf Hussein Osman "Dhumaal," who is recovering in Nairobi from a bullet wound sustained in Mogadishu fighting, traced his government's lack of success on the battlefield in a July 3 conversation to well-trained and motivated al-Shabaab fighters and the efforts of some members of Parliament to undermine the TFG. "Dhumaal" acknowledged continuing difficulties integrating TFG and Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) militias. He was dismissive of Minister of Defense "Gandi," who has spent little time in Mogadishu since the new TFG was created in February. "Dhumaal" comes to Somalia's security forces via a career in the police. He is well-regarded by his peers, but his departure from Mogadishu not long after the suicide assassination of Minister of National Security Omar Hashi appears to have left Minister of State for Defense and warlord "Indha Adde," in charge of the TFG's struggling fighters. End summary.

¶2. (C) Somalia Unit officers met TFG armed forces commander Yusuf Hussein Osman "Dhumaal" on July 3 at the Somalia Embassy. "Dhumaal" was in Nairobi recovering from a wound to his leg he had received during recent fighting in Mogadishu's Karan District. He walked slowly and with the assistance of a cane. "Dhumaal" had been in Somalia's police force for many years. His only international experience appeared to have been a training course in Germany soon after the storming of the hijacked Lufthansa aircraft at Mogadishu Airport in 1977.

TFG Forces "Not Very Good"

¶3. (C) "Dhumaal" described the security militia he commands as "not very good" with the exception of "some of the police," who are subordinate to Police Chief Abdi Hassan Awale "Qeybdiid." Efforts to unite TFG and ARS forces continue. The forces "work side-by-side" "Dhumaal" said but some of the ARS troops shun the TFG uniform, as they continue to see themselves more as Islamic Courts Union forces than as members of a TFG army. "Dhumaal's" forces "generally" obey orders, but continuing allegiance to clan in some cases and lack of training in others create discipline problems.

Some MPs Undermine TFG

¶4. (C) "Dhumaal" joined others in the TFG with whom Somalia Unit has spoken in alleging that poorer quality weapons and the superior training of al-Shabaab forces were responsible for the TFG's battlefield losses. ("Dhumaal" was grateful for

USG efforts to supply ammunition, however.) Unlike others, he argued that the TFG was being undermined by members of Parliament, all of them from the more recently added ARS contingent. Some of those MPs, who "Dhumaal" refused to name, had been threatened by members of their clan; others had been bribed, while still others thought that the TFG might fail and were "sitting on the fence."

#### Relationship with "Indha Adde"

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15. (C) "Dhumaal" said that he nominally commanded about 2,600 troops; half of them from the ARS and half from the TFG. Not all of them had their own weapons, he said, and their degree of military preparedness varied widely. The 2,600 troops were as a rule deployed in small units of thirty to fifty soldiers, "like al-Shabaab," "Dhumaal" said. The TFG had a few old trucks for transporting its troops. The 540 remaining Ugandan-trained troops were not part of the 2,600, "Dhumaal" said. They were used for "special missions." Minister of State for Defense, warlord Yusuf Mohammed Siyad "Indha Adde," controlled about 250 better-trained men. He also could deploy thirteen technicals, eleven of which were equipped with "big guns." "Dhumaal" readily admitted that he did not control "Indha Adde's" militia, but the warlord and he coordinated the efforts of their respective troops. Asked if Minister of Defense "Gandi," who is rarely in Mogadishu, played a role in the security forces, "Dhumaal" stared, then said only that "he is my boss."

16. (C) Also at "Dhumaal's" disposal were an unspecified number of troops generally loyal to different members of the

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Banadir Administration. They were "not well-trained," could generally be described as clan militias, but would perform day fighting if fed.

#### Artillery Spotters, Snipers

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17. (C) The joint security forces could deploy artillery spotters. The spotters were "much older" soldiers who had received their training as members of the pre-1991 Somali armed forces. They cooperated well with AMISOM. "Dhumaal" described relations with AMISOM as "excellent." He acknowledged later in the conversation that lack of discipline and communications problems among TFG forces meant that the TFG was often unable to take advantage of artillery and other support provided by AMISOM. The TFG's patchy performance record meant that AMISOM was not always willing to provide the necessary back-up.

18. (C) Also at the TFG's disposal were Ethiopian-trained snipers. "Dhumaal" dismissed them as "not disciplined."

#### Poor Communications, Little Training

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19. (C) "Dhumaal" described a rudimentary military communications system. In some cases, he was able to provide unit leaders with a walkie talkie, but more often communication was via telephone. The walkie talkies, he added, were powered by disposable batteries, which often faded quickly when used frequently during battle. The inability of the TFG to sustain control over territory it has taken in recent battles was in part, "Dhumaal" said, traceable to communication problems, but lack of training remained the key problem. "Dhumaal" thought that two types of training were necessary: one was a rudimentary, basic military training, but also necessary was training targeted at younger troops which would create a sense of Somali nationalism after eighteen years of anarchy and absence of a central government.

ASWJ Has Little to

## Offer in Mogadishu

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¶10. (C) "Dhumaal" seemed little interested in the recent agreement to cooperate signed by the TFG with Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a. "They have nothing in Mogadishu," he said. He hoped that his own Marehan clan would soon open a front against al-Shabaab in the area of Dolo (Gedo Region), where he alleged they were receiving support from the Ethiopian government.

## Comment

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¶11. (C) "Dhumaal's" allegation about fence-sitting ARS parliamentarians tracks with other comments Somalia Unit has heard recently that signal an increasing ambivalence among some near or in the TFG who are now uncertain about its future, and worried about their own futures should al-Shabaab come to power. Some success in the fighting, coupled with a more aggressive and inspired media campaign by President Sharif and other TFG members could go some way toward reversing the drift away from the government. The most recent round of fighting on July 1 - 2 (reftel), however, no doubt did little to reduce creeping skepticism about the TFG's ability to succeed.  
RANNEBERGER